

NINA

Annabel Visits the Country



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Choo! Choo!

“There’s the train now!” called Flora excitedly. Fred and Flora were meeting Cousin Annabel. This was Annabel’s very first trip to the country.

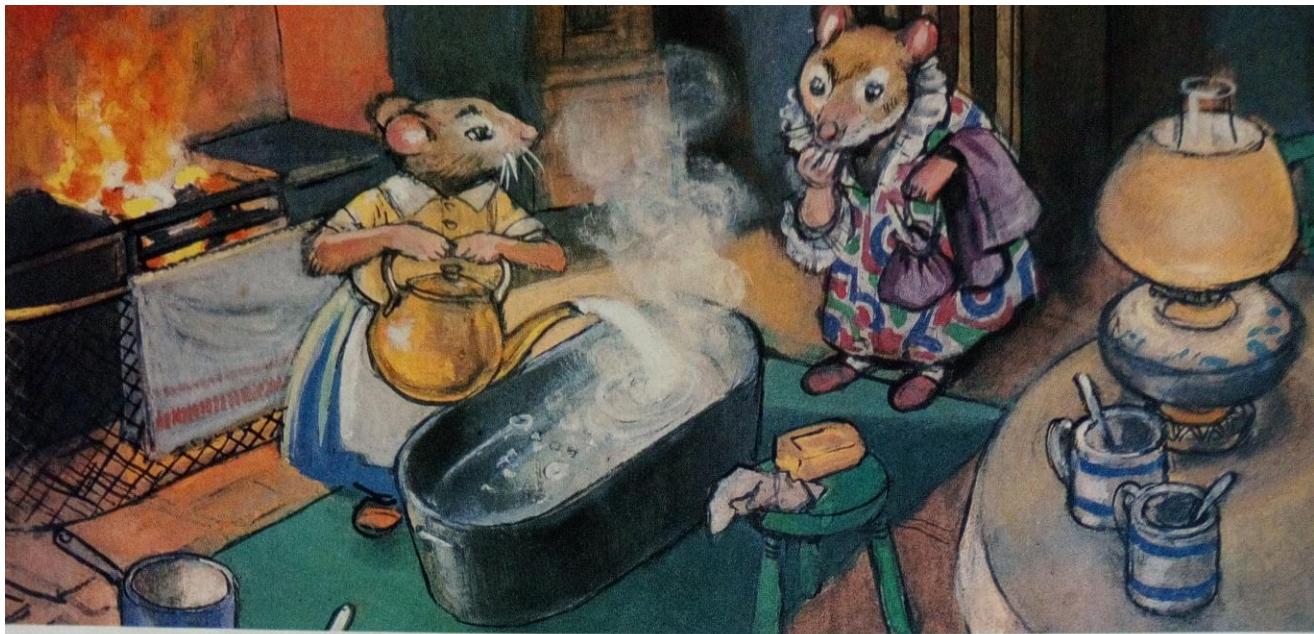
The train came to a screeching stop, and Annabel walked onto the platform. A porter carried her huge pile of suitcases. She rushed up to Flora and Fred and gave them big hugs. “Now, let’s get a taxi and I’ll tell you a . . .”

“We don’t have taxis here,” laughed Flora.

“No taxis!” cried Annabel. “How do we get home?”

“We walk, of course,” said Flora.

“Oh,” was all Annabel said.



"I'm sure you'd like a bath after your long journey," said Flora when they reached her little cottage. "You just unpack and I'll get it ready."

"Where's the bathtub?" asked Annabel as she walked downstairs.

"Right here, in front of the nice warm fire," said Flora. "You don't want to wash outside, do you?"

"My, how different!" gulped Annabel.

After supper Annabel went upstairs to change. She was certain they were going out for the evening.

"I think I'll change, too," yawned Flora.

But while Annabel was putting on her party clothes, Flora was putting on her nightgown. "That's a beautiful nightgown! Goodnight, Annabel," said Flora sleepily.

"I thought . . ." Annabel started to say, but Flora had already closed her door.



The next morning, Annabel cheered up when Flora said they must go out. She thought they were going shopping, but they only went out to the garden and picked vegetables.

Fred rode by on his bicycle and told Annabel that if she really wanted to go out, she should help with the harvest. But that was worse! It was just lots of hard work and bugs!





"It's dull and uncomfortable in the country," Annabel decided. "I'll write Jeremy and ask him to take me home." But no sooner had she mailed her letter, than something exciting happened! Mr. Badger, the postman, delivered a letter for Flora that had come all the way from Australia!

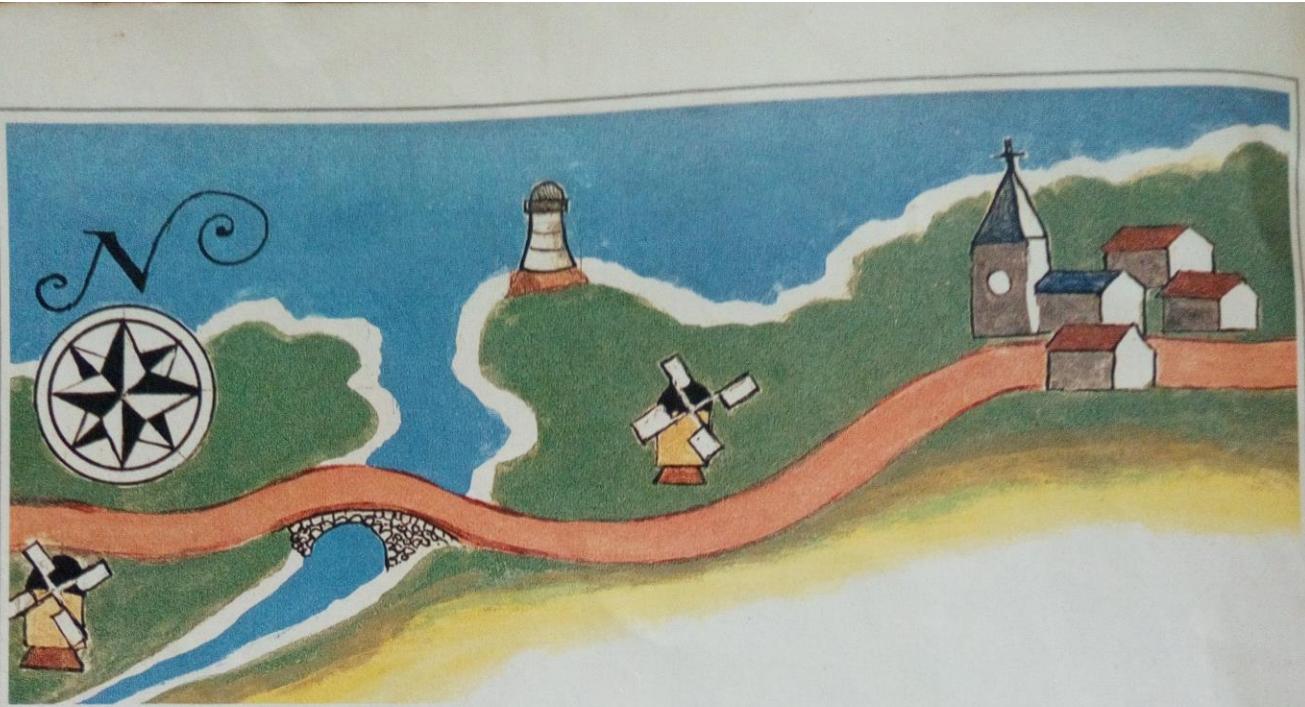
"It's from Cousin Bruce," cried Flora. "He's coming to see us. He says to meet him at the crossroads at 10 o'clock on Tuesday."

"But that's today!" squealed Annabel.

They hurried off to the crossroads. They arrived just in time to see Cousin Bruce pull up in his big shiny car. Flora was thrilled to meet their Australian cousin. But Annabel wasn't very excited.







"I've come to visit Great Aunt Sarah!" Bruce explained.

"Oh, wonderful!" said Flora. "I haven't seen Great Aunt Sarah in months."

"Wonderful," sighed Annabel to herself. "Another dull afternoon in the country."

Off they went to see Great Aunt Sarah. "That's her thatched cottage over there," said Flora.

Great Aunt Sarah was delighted to have her young nieces and nephew for a visit. "I decided it was time to get to know some of my other family," said Bruce. "You know, Papa never talked about his side of the family much."

"Oh, then I have just the thing!" exclaimed Aunt Sarah clapping her hands. "I have an old family album in the attic. Would you be a dear and go fetch it? Mind you, it is a bit dusty and dark up there."







"Dear me," cried Flora. "I haven't been in this old attic since I was tiny."

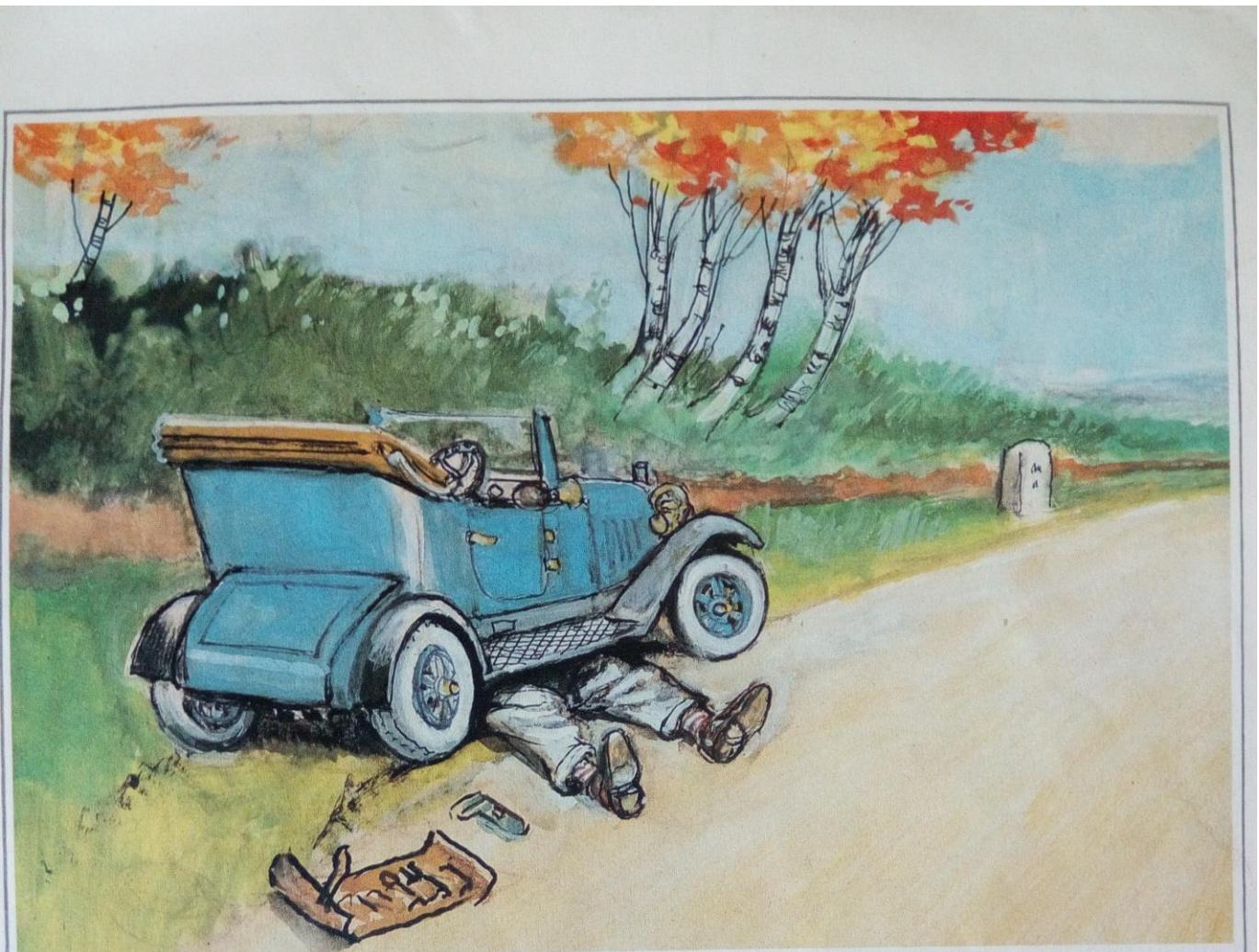
"Well, Great Aunt Sarah was right about the dust!" exclaimed Annabel, with a big sneeze. "There's nothing up here but old boxes!"

"Oh, Annabel!" said Flora. "Why don't you look around? Maybe you'll find something interesting."

Annabel opened one of the trunks.

"Look at this!" she exclaimed. "A riding outfit! I've always wanted to go riding. I wonder how I will look in this!"





The next day after visiting Great Aunt Sarah, Annabel decided to go horseback riding.

“You’ll have to ride old Buttercup,” said Flora. “He’s the only horse in the village.”

Old Buttercup was so big, Annabel could hardly stay on. And when he galloped she fell into the mud! “I hope Jeremy got my letter.” Annabel wailed.

In fact, Jeremy wasn’t very far away. His nice new car had broken down just outside the village.



Finally, Fred had to tow Jeremy and Annabel all the way home with his muddy old tractor. Annabel was very embarrassed!

"I never want to go to the country again!" Annabel exclaimed once they had arrived home. "I'll send Flora a present. It was very nice of her to invite me."

The next day Mr. Badger delivered a package to Flora. "How nice!" she cried. "Poor Annabel must really miss the country!"

